AN ORDINANCE OF THE LORDS & COMMONS Assembled in PARLIAMENT, FOR Keeping of Scandalous persons from the Sacrament of the LORDS-SUPPER, the Enabling of Congregations for the choyce OF ELDERS, AND Supplying of Defects in former Ordinances and Directions of PARLIAMENT Concerning CHURCH-GOVERNMENT.

Die Sabbathi, 14. Martii. 1645.

Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, That this Ordinance be forthwith Printed and Published.

H: Elsynge, Cler. Parl. D. Com.

London, Printed for *Edward Husband*, Printer to the Honorable House of Commons. 1646.

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Die Sabbathi, 14. Martii, 1645.

An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament.

THe Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament, Being very sensible of the great Duty which lieth upon them to settle Matters concerning *Religion* & the *Worship* of Almighty God, And having continually before their Eyes, the COVENANT which they have so solemnly taken for the performance thereof, and the manifold motives and incouragements thereunto, which are given them from God himself, by a speacial Hand of Providence, powring forth daily mercies upon them: In discharge of their Duty, and in pursuance of the said *Covenant*, and in thankfulnesse to God for all his Mercies having diligently applyed themselves to that Work of his House by his Grace and assistance, they have made some progresse therein, notwithstanding the exigency of other Affairs, accompanied often times with great and imminent dangers; And notwithstanding the great difficulty of the Work it self in divers respects, and particularly in the right joynting of what was to be settled with the Laws and Government of the Kingdom, the want whereof hath caused much trouble in this and other States, yet by the merciful assistance of God, having removed the Book of *Common Prayer*, with all its unnecessary and burdensome Ceremonies, and established the *Directory* in the room thereof; and having abolished the Prelatical Hierarchy by Archbishops, Bishops and their Dependants, and instead thereof, laid the foundation of a *Presbyterial Government* in every Congregation, with Subordination to Classical, Provincial, and National Assemblies, and of them all to the Parliament; Although it cannot be ex-

pected that a preſent Rule in every particular ſhould be ſettled all at once, but that there will be need of Supplyment and Additions, and haply alſo of alterations in ſome things, as experience ſhall bring to light the neceſſity thereof; yet were the Fundamentals and Subſtantial parts of that Government long ſince ſettled in perſons, by and over whom it was to be exerciſed, and the nature, extent and reſpective Subordination of their power was limited and deſigned; onely concerning the Adminiſtration of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, how all ſuch perſons as were guilty of notorious and ſcandalous Offences, might be ſuſpended from it, ſome difficulty ariſing, not ſo much in the Matter it ſelf, as in the manner how it ſhould be done, and who ſhould be the Judges of the Offence: The Lords and Commons having it alwayes in their purpoſe and intention, and it being accordingly Declared and Reſolved by them, That all ſorts of notorious ſcandalous Offendors ſhould be ſuſpended from the Sacrament; For the preventing of an indefinite, and unlimited power in the Elderſhips, they held it fit for the preſent, That the particular Caſes of ſuch ſcandalous Offences ſhould be ſpecified and enumerated, with expreſſe Declaration, That further proviſion ſhould be made by Authority of Parliament, for ſuch Caſes as were left out of the ſaid enumeration; which accordingly having ſince taken into their ſerious conſideration, and having had ſeveral debates thereupon as the difficulty of the Matter required, which hath taken up much time, for the avoiding, as far as poſſible may be, all Arbitrary power; and that all ſuch Caſes wherein perſons ſhould be ſuſpended from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, might be brought to the Cognizance, and paſſe the Judgement of the parliament, who were bound in Iuſtice as well to take care that none be injuriouſly detained from

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that Ordinance, as to give power whereby such may be kept away who are unfit to partake therein; And to the intent also that a full and speedy course may be settled to enable the several Elderships to suspend all such Offendors from the Lords Supper, without having recourse to the Parliament it self from all parts of the Kingdom upon every such emergent Case, which might prove troublesome and tedious, and give liberty to such notorious and scandalous Offendors to communicate a long space in the said Ordinance; and to the Intent likewise, That all such Cases coming first from the particular Elderships, may after they have passed the Judgement of Parliament, return again to all the several Elderships within the Kingdom, to proceed upon them from time to time in like maner as in the Cases enumerated. For the ends and purposes aforesaid, and also for supply of some defects in the former Ordinance, and Directions of Parliament concerning the choice of Elders, and some other Matters;

I. **Be it Ordained, that there be forthwith a choice made of** Elders **throughout the Kingdom of** England, **and Dominion of** Wales, **in the respective Parish Churches and Chappels, according to such Directions as have already passed both Houses, bearing date** August **the nineteenth, One thousand six hundred fourty and five, and since that time; and all Classes and Parochial Congregations, are respectively hereby Authorised**

rised and required forthwith effectually to proceed therein accordingly.

II. That notice of the Election of Parochial and Congregational Elders, and of the time when it shall be, be given by the Minister in the publike Assembly, the next Lords day but one before, and that on the said Lords day a Sermon be Preached preparatory to that weighty businesse.

III. That such Elections shall be made by the Congregation, or the major part of them then assembled, being such as have taken the National Covenant, and are not persons under Age, nor servants that have no Families.

IV. That the Tryers of Elections of Elders, shall have power to receive, hear, and determine all exceptions brought in to them concerning undue Elections; and to that end to call before them all such persons so elected, and accepting such Election, and to send for such witnesses as shall be nominated unto them by such persons as shall bring in such exceptions; and shall have power to examine

mine upon Oath, both the persons bringing in such exceptions, and the said Witnesses, concerning any undue proceedings in the manner of the said Election, and concerning all matters of Ignorance or Scandal objected against the party elected, and expressed in any Ordinance of Parliament, to be a sufficient cause of suspension from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper (and of which, any Eldership by any Ordinance of Parliament hath cognizance and jurisdiction) and that shall be proved to have been committed within one whole year before the exceptions exhibited; and that the persons against whom the exceptions are taken, shall have like liberty to produce Witnesses to be examined in like manner on their behalf.

V. That the Tryers shall have power to examine, whether the Elders that are to be chosen, be so qualified as is expressed in the Ordinance or Directions which hath passed both Houses.

VI. That in case the Election of any Elder of a Congregation upon just proof

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and examination, be found by the Tryers appointed for that purpose to be unduely made; the said Tryers may order such Elder to be removed, and another to be chosen in his place.

VII. That the Chappels or places in the Houses of the King and his Children, shall continue free for the exercise of Divine Duties to be performed according to the Directory, and not otherwise.

VIII. That the Chappels or places in the Houses of the Peers of this Realm, shall have the like freedom.

IX. That the Savoy Parish shall be reckoned within the eleventh Classis of London.

X. That the Chappel of the Rolls, the two Serjeants Inns, and the four Inns of Court, shall be a Province of themselves.

That the Presbytery of the Chappel of the Rolls, the two Serjeants Inns, and the four Inns of Court, shall be divided into two Classes.

That Lincolns-Inn, Grays-Inn, Serjeants-Inn in Chancery-Lane, and the Rolls, shall be one Classis: That the two Temples, and

and Serjeants-Inn in Fleetstreet, shall be the other Classis.

XI. That the Classical Assemblies in each Province, shall assemble themselves within one moneth after they shall be constituted and this Ordinance published, and shall thenceforth hold their meetings monethly by adjournment, or oftner if need be, in such a certain place as shall be most convenient for the ease of the people.

XII. That out of every Congregational Eldership, there shall be two Elders or more, not exceeding the number of four, and one Minister sent to every Classis.

XIII. That all persons guilty of notorious scandalous offences, and more particularly, all renouncers of the true Protestant Religion, professed in the Church of England; and all persons that shall by preaching or writing, maintain any such errours as do subvert any of those Articles, the ignorance whereof do render any person excluded from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: And all

persons that shall make any Images, or pictures of the Trinity, or of any person thereof: And all persons in whom malice appears, and they refuse to be reconciled; and the same appearing upon just proof, all such persons may be suspended from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

XIV. That in every Province persons shall be chosen by the Houses of Parliament, that shall be Commissioners to judge of scandalous offences (not enumerated in any Ordinance of Parliament) to them presented; And that the Eldership of that Congregation where the said offence was committed, shall upon examination and proof of such scandalous offence (in like maner as is to be done in the offences enumerated) certifie the same to the Commissioners, together with the proof taken before them, and before the said certificate, the party accused shall have liberty to make such defence as he shall think fit before the said Eldership, and also before the Commissioners, before any certificate shall be made to the Parliament.

liament. And if the said Commissioners after examination of all parties, shall determine the offence so presented and proved to be scandalous, and the same shall certifie to the Congregation, the Eldership thereof may suspend such person from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper in like manner as in cases enumerated in any Ordinance of Parliament.

XV. That such persons as shall be chosen for Commissioners to judge of notorious and scandalous offences as aforesaid, shall be men of good understanding in matters of Religion, sound in the Faith, prudent, discreet, grave, and of unblameable conversation, and such as do usually receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, as Members of a Presbyterial Congregation.

XVI. That if any person shall commit any scandalous offence (not enumerated in any Ordinance of Parliament) upon the day of the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper in the face of the Congregation after it is assembled, the Minister of that Congre-

gation may forbear to administer the Sacrament to such a person for that time, and he shall within eight dayes after certifie the said offence and forbearance unto the Commissioners aforesaid, and upon certificate so made, the said Commissioners shall proceed thereupon as in other cases not enumerated, and shall make certificate of the case or cases, with their opinions, to both Houses of Parliament with all speed: And thereupon the Parliament shall proceed to a final determination of the case, and send the same determination thereof to the Parish where such offence shall have been committed; and as often as the like case shall fall out in any Congregation, the Eldership thereof having notice of such determination, shall proceed thereupon as in case of offences enumerated in any Ordinance of Parliament.

XVII. That the said Commissioners upon notice given to them or any two of them, of any case of scandal befalu (whereof they ought to have cognizance by vertue of any Ordinance of Parliament)

ment) shall assemble themselves in such certain place within that Province, as may be most convenient for the ease of the people: And thereof shall give timely notice to the Ministers of that Province whereof they are Commissioners, and being met shall adjourn their meeting from time to time, for such time as the case shall require.

XVIII. That the Eldership of each Congregation, or the major part of them, as also the Classis of each Province or major part of them, and also the Provincial Commissioners or the major part of them after they shall be assembled, shall have power by Warrant under their hands (in all cases whereof they have cognizance by any Ordinance of Parliament) to convent before them all persons, against whom any complaint shall be brought by vertue of any such Ordinance, and all such Witnesses as shall be named according to any such Ordinance for the discovery of the Truth of such complaint; and in case any such person shall refuse to ap-

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pear, not being a Peer of this Realm, Member of the House of Commons, or Assistant of the House of Peers, or Officer of either of the Houses of Parliament, then upon complaint made to the next Justice of the Peace, the party refusing shall be brought before him; and in case of obstinate persisting, shall be committed by the said Justice of Peace till he submit to order.

XIX. That if any Member of a Congregation shall by vertue of any Ordinance of Parliament for any offence of scandal, be suspended from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; and being so suspended, shall offer himself to any other Congregation to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper together with them, such Congregation having notice of such suspension, shall not without certificate from the Congregration whereof he is a Member, admit him unto the Sacrament.

XX. That any Minister of a Congregation may be suspended from giving or receiving, and any Elder from receiving the

the Sacrament of the Lords Supper for the same causes, and in the same manner, and have the like benefit of Appeal as any other person may by any Ordinance of Parliament; & after such suspension of the Elder from the Sacrament, the Elder so suspended, shall not execute that Office during his suspension, until the Appeal be determined; and if upon Appeal the suspension appear to have been just, then another to be chosen in his place.

XXI. That in all cases of Appeal to the Classical, Provincial, or National Assembly, they shall have power respectively to proceed thereupon by examination of witnesses and otherwise, in such manner as the Congregational Eldership from which the Appeal ariseth are enabled to do by any Ordinance of Parliament, and shall certifie such their proceedings unto the said Eldership.

XXII. That in case of such suspension of any Minister, the Classis whereunto the said Congregation doth belong, shall appoint some fit person or persons for the supply

supply of that place during such suspension, and shall have power to allow convenient maintenance for that end, out of the profits belonging to the Minister so suspended, and have hereby power to sequester and imploy the same for that purpose.

XXIII. That in all cases of suspension of any person from the Sacrament, the party suspended (upon manifestation of his or her repentance before the Eldership by whom the party was suspended) shall be admitted again unto the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and the suspension thenceforth shall be void.

Provided, That if the said Commissioners or any two of them shall not determine the case so certified as aforesaid to them from the Eldership within six weeks after the Certificate to them made, The party is hereby enjoyned to forbear coming to the Sacrament until the cause shall be determined, or until he give satisfaction to the Eldership.

FINIS.